

INSIDE GARDNER

SPRING 2020

SMART METER INSTALLATION TO BEGIN THIS SUMMER


Starting this summer, the City of Gardner will begin replacing more than 9,000 of its utility customers' current meters with advanced metering infrastructure known as smart meters. The smart meters will record the consumption of electric and water usage data, respectively, and communicate the information directly to the city for monitoring and billing.

The city initiated a move to a smart metering system after deciding to replace its antiquated devices in an effort to improve data accuracy, reduce operating costs, and enhance customer service.

"Because of aging infrastructure, in 2018, there was an approximate 13 percent in unaccounted water loss," said Amy Foster, business service manager. "Smart metering will securely supply accurate, real-time information that the city and our customers can instantly view and use to make better and more informed decisions concerning usage."

In addition to automatically measuring electricity and water usage, the smart metering system features two-way communication capabilities, allowing the city to remotely connect and disconnect service, identify and isolate outages, monitor voltage and water pressure, and detect tampering.

"Not only will our customers be able to save money by monitoring and adjusting their usage, but the city will also be able to reduce operating costs with the immediate ability to locate leaks and power outages. This means faster outage restoration and repairs, and fewer inconveniences for customers," said Gonzalo Garcia, utilities director. "This advanced technology also eliminates the need to read every customer's meter monthly manually. The information is readily available at our fingertips."

The city expects to complete the installation of the smart meters by year's end. There is an Opt-Out option available for eligible customers. To learn of those qualifications or for general questions about smart meters, visit gardnerkansas.gov/smartmeters, or call the Utility Billing Department at (913) 856-7535. 



NEW BUSINESS NEWS

TALLGRASS APARTMENTS

Soon, a new housing development, Tallgrass Apartments, will be moving into Gardner, providing more options for the city's growing population. The 43-acre project, located at the northwest corner of University Drive and Moonlight Road, will consist of approximately 480 apartments to be constructed in several phases over a three to five-year period. Before construction begins, the currently raw farm ground, rezoned for housing, will endure several infrastructure improvements along University Drive this spring, including sewer, water, electrical and road work. As part of the first phase of the project, developers will begin the construction of 130 two and three-story apartments and the clubhouse, starting in late fall 2020 and with an anticipated completion date of late 2021.





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A message from

MAYOR STEVE SHUTE

Even while most of the world is shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Gardner is still very much on the move!

Our City Hall staff is still available via phone and email to assist our residents and customers. Also, our Police Officers, Public Works, and Utility staff are out and about, busily working on assorted projects and keeping us safe while prudently practicing social distancing. If you see them, please remember to thank them with a wave or thumbs up. They put themselves on the line for all of us each day!

In March, the Governing Body made an effort to lighten the load on the budgets of our citizens and businesses by passing electric rate relief for all of our residents and forgiving the first 5000 Kwh of usage for our commercial ratepayers. I would personally like to thank the City Council

for making this move on behalf of our community!

Also, during these unprecedented times, remember our local restaurants. If you can, please support them by ordering in at least one family meal a week. You will help keep them in business while enjoying some great food in the process.

Lastly, in my social media postings, I have been using the hashtag #GardnerStrong to describe the neighborliness, resiliency, and giving spirit of our citizens. We watch out for each other, we lift one another when we are down, and we are relentlessly positive in our outlook. WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS, together. And when we do, we will come out even more #GardnerStrong than before.

As always, I am honored to be your Mayor – especially in such a time as this.

Stay #GardnerStrong!

GARDNER'S HIDDEN GEMS INSPIRE DANCE ACADEMY

In Shakespeare's famous play, *Romeo and Juliet*, he eloquently posed the question, "What's in a name?" Well, to Inspire Dance Academy, EVERYTHING! Inspiring kids and adults through movement is what owner Heather Shutt envisioned when she opened the doors to the dance studio just five years ago.

"At Inspire, we strive to create a fun, loving, safe environment for everyone who participates in our classes," Shutt said. "We believe in teaching more than dance steps. We want to inspire and cultivate our students' growth as individuals and take the positivity they learn in our classes beyond the studio doors."

Nestled at the corner of 138 E. Main St., Inspire started as a one-room studio but has since expanded to accommodate its 330 students. There they teach 12 different genres of dance, including but not limited to, ballet, jazz, tumbling, cheer, combo, hip hop, contemporary and parent-n-tot classes."

"We've doubled our space and now have four rooms where we can offer all our various classes," Shutt said. "We host approximately 50 different class times throughout the week, catering to all ages. Currently, our youngest student is 19-months old, and we also have adults of different ages who don't necessarily dance, but choose to take our adult-only workout classes. There's something for everyone."

Staffed with six teachers whose experience ranges from professionally dancing on a national stage to performing on an NFL football field as a Dallas Cowboy cheerleader, Inspire brings a wide range of talent and expertise to the community."

"Gardner is home. I graduated from Gardner Edgerton High School, as did my parents, and my extended family is from the area as well. I knew when I was ready to open Inspire, Gardner would be the location," Shutt said. "We take pride in our city, and whether we are at a performance or competition, we make sure to represent Gardner the best way possible. That's what you do for family, and Gardner is family."



WHAT IS YOUR TORNADO SHELTER PLAN?



Spring is nearly here, and with the warmer temperatures comes an increased chance for tornadoes. Having a well-established safety plan in place will increase your chances of surviving one. This plan should be known by all members of the family, especially children who may find themselves home alone when a tornado strikes.

HOUSES: Storm Cellar, Basement or Safe Room

A storm cellar is the best place to go in case of a tornado. A basement is also a good shelter in most cases. If your basement is not entirely underground or has outside doors or windows, stay as far away from them. If possible, avoid seeking shelter underneath heavy objects on the floor above. Use coverings such as pillows, blankets and helmets to shield your head and body from flying debris.

A reinforced safe room (or above-ground tornado shelter) is as good as an underground shelter in most situations. Safe rooms are specially-designed reinforced tornado shelters built into homes, schools, and other buildings. More information about safe rooms is available at www.fema.gov/safe-rooms.

APARTMENTS

Apartment dwellers should have a plan, especially if living on an upper floor. Make arrangements with a neighbor on the lowest level if your complex does not have a reinforced shelter. In some cases, the apartment clubhouse or laundry room may be used as a shelter, but you will need to have access to these areas at all times.

MOBILE HOMES

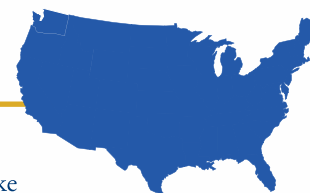
Mobile homes are especially susceptible to high winds from severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. Mobile homes cannot stand up to even a weak tornado, and you should make plans BEFORE the storm arrives to get to a safe shelter. Due to the potentially short amount of time between a warning and the arrival of a tornado, people should consider executing their safety plans when a tornado watch is issued - do not wait for the tornado warning! Get out of the mobile home and find a more substantial shelter as quickly as possible.

Finally, despite your location when a tornado hits, you should follow these three important guidelines:

- GET IN** — If you're outside, get inside. Then move as far into the middle of the building as possible. Put as many barriers between you and the outside as possible.
- GET DOWN** — Get underground if possible. If you cannot, go to the lowest floor available.
- COVER UP** — Flying and falling debris is a storm's number one killer. Use pillows, blankets, coats, helmets, etc. to cover up and protect your head and body from flying debris.

For more information, contact Johnson County Fire District #1 at (913) 764-7635. 

PLAN TO COMPLETE THE 2020 CENSUS



The 2020 Census is underway across the nation by the U.S. Census Bureau. The results of the census are critically important because this once-a-decade census data helps businesses, researchers and communities make decisions that impact you. Approximately \$800 billion in federal funding is distributed to cities each year based on the population totals collected by the census. That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs. This information is also used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state acquires. The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country is counted. The census is available to take completely online in addition to the traditional methods of phone and mail. Each household received a postcard with instructions on how to complete the census. Data collection will continue through August 2020. For more information about the 2020 Census, visit www.2020census.gov.

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

Messages for the Governing Body can be left at (913) 856-0939 or with the following info.



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UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS (MONDAYS AT 7PM)

May 18 June 1 June 15 July 6 July 20
 View more City Council meeting dates at **GARDNERKANSAS.GOV**



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NEW QUIKTRIP TRAVEL CENTER COMING TO TOWN


QuikTrip will soon expand its services to a second location in Gardner. Starting this fall, the company will begin constructing a new QuikTrip Travel Center at the southwest corner of South Gardner Road and West 188th Street. Travel centers provide a broader range of products and services for travelers. This approximately 8.8-acre project will consist of the following:

- a 7,318 square-foot building
- six semi-truck filling lanes containing twelve diesel pumps
- a truck parking area located along the southwest corner
- a fast-food restaurant

The travel center is expected to serve the general drive-by public as well as the semi-truck traffic that services the intermodal facility. Its construction will coincide with the I-35 and Gardner Road Interchange Improvement Project. QuikTrip plans to open the doors to its new location by summer 2021.



CITY'S 2020 WATER QUALITY REPORT NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The City of Gardner's 2019 Consumer Confidence Report on water quality is now available at www.gardnerkansas.gov/waterqualityreport2020. The city offers this annual report to assure citizens that the public water system provides safe, clean, and dependable water according to state and federal regulations. The report covers the previous calendar year and includes water quality data, such as water sources and sample testing results. Citizens can request a hard copy of the report by contacting the Utility Department at (913) 856-0980. 

BACKFLOW TEST REPORTS DUE BY JULY 1

To ensure safe drinking water is provided to the community, the city requires annual certified testing of all backflow prevention devices. Backflow test reports are due by July 1, 2020. Backflow takes place when water in a distribution system flows in the opposite direction from what is normal. The city requires backflow prevention devices to protect the public water supply from cross-contamination by sprinkler systems, boilers, carbonators, etc. Failure to conduct these tests can pose a serious health risk to customers who use the water system. Customers must use certified testers, such as a certified landscaper or plumber, to complete the test. For more information about backflow testing, visit www.gardnerkansas.gov or contact the Utilities Department at (913) 856-0980. 